

## TESTIMONY: HB's 4188, 4189 and 4190

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My name is Randy Block. I'm Director of the Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network (MUSJN), a statewide network of over 2,000 Unitarian Universalist activists and their allies. Special thanks to Senate Families, Children & Seniors Committee for providing an opportunity for the public to comment on HB's 4188, 4189 and 4190, bills that would amend PA 116, "an act to provide for the protection of children through the licensing and regulation of child care organizations".

The Unitarian Universalist social justice network urges this Committee to vote NO on HB's 4188, 4189 and 4190. This view is shared by people from the following five faith groups that have become members of MUUSJN's Michigan Interfaith Reproductive Justice Coalition: United Church of Christ, Episcopal, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim. Why do UU's and people from many faith oppose bills that call for "religious freedom"?

1. Unitarian Universalists are proud that we have a right to hold our own religious or spiritual beliefs. We believe that others should also have that same freedom. This freedom to express our religion is protected in both the U.S. and the Michigan Constitutions.
2. However, many people of faith also believe that Americans don't have a right to act on those religious beliefs if that would harm others. We affirm that all persons should be treated with dignity.
3. These bills would allow faith based adoption agencies to refuse to provide services to same sex couples, making it more difficult to find loving parents for hard to place children with special needs. Studies have shown that children raised by gay parents are as likely to make normal progress in school and be resilient as other children.
4. Members of the Michigan Interfaith Reproductive Justice Coalition believe that gay parents should have the right to care for children. Denial of this right, in the name of religion, is still discrimination.
5. We need to do what best for all children and all families.

Tragically, these bills would become a threat to the very religious freedoms they claim to protect. These three bills would allow people from one religious view to impose their religious beliefs on others. Based on the principles of our religious faiths and the importance of preserving the best interests of children in Michigan, I urge members of the Families, Children and Seniors Committee to vote NO on HB's 4188, 4189 and 4190.

For more information, contact Randy Block at 248-549-5170.